

**LOUISIANA RECOVERY AUTHORITY
Board of Directors Meeting
Louisiana Boardroom – Louisiana Building – Baton Rouge Community College
Wednesday, April 26, 2006**

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Norman Francis, chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), called the meeting to order at 1:23 p.m. in the Louisiana Boardroom of the Louisiana Building at Baton Rouge Community College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It is noted for the record that notices to the public and news media of the time and place of the meeting had been given in compliance with the Louisiana Open Meetings Law. Dr. Francis extended a thank you to BRCC Chancellor Dr. Myrtle E. B. Dorsey for graciously hosting the LRA.

II. PRAYER

Reverend Harry Blake, member of the authority, led the board in prayer.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Norman Francis led the board in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. ROLL CALL

Ms. Robyn Cockerham called the roll.

Board Members Present:

Dr. Norman Francis, Chairman
Sen. Diana Bajoie
Mr. Boysie Bollinger
Rev. Harry Blake
Mr. Tim Coulon
Mr. Rene Cross
Mr. James Davison
Ms. Donna Fraiche
Mr. Tom Henning
Ms. Linda Johnson
Mr. John T. Landry

Board Members Present:

Mrs. Laura Leach
Mr. Walter Leger, Jr.
Dr. Calvin Mackie
Mr. Chet Morrison
Mr. Virgil Robinson
Rep. Joe Salter
Mr. John E. Smith
Mr. Matt Stuller
Mr. David Voelker
Mr. Rod West
Mr. Mike Woods

Board Members Absent:

Mr. Walter Isaacson, Vice Chairman
Ms. Dale Atkins
Ms. Donna Brazile
Rep. Yvonne Dorsey
Sen. Don Hines
Ms. Sibal Holt
Ms. Mary Matalin
Mr. Sean Reilly
Dr. Mary Ella Sanders
Ms. Susan Taylor

Staff Members Present:

Mr. Andy Kopplin, LRA Executive Director
Mr. Dave Bowman
Mr. Miles Bruder
Ms. Robyn Cockerham
Mr. Hal Cohen
Ms. Jessica Dardenne
Ms. Ann Guissinger
Ms. Catherine Heitman
Ms. Kim Jupiter
Mr. Adam Knapp
Ms. Melissa Landry
Ms. Meg Mahoney
Ms. Alison Neustrom
Ms. Christina Stephens
Ms. Alesia Wilkins

Witnesses Present (in order of appearance):

Dr. Les Johnson
Dr. Jimmy Guidry
Ms. Colletta Barrett
Mr. Joseph DiFatta, Jr.
Mr. Craig P. Taffaro, Jr.
Ms. Angela Glover Blackwell
Ms. Elizabeth English
Ms. Patricia Gay

V. TASK FORCE REPORTS – DISCUSSIONS AND PROPOSALS

Dr. Norman Francis moved to amend the posted agenda in favor of hearing the Health Care Task Force report before the Housing Task Force report. Ms. Robyn Cockerham took the roll-call vote.

Amend the Agenda of the April 26, 2006, LRA Board meeting to allow the Health Care Task Force report before the Housing Task Force report.

RESOLVED, that the agenda to the April 26, 2006, LRA Executive Board Meeting be amended to allow the Health Care Task Force report before the Housing Task Force report.

Voting: Blake, Coulon, Cross, Davison, Fraiche, Francis, Henning, Johnson, Landry, Leach, Leger, Mackie, Morrison, Robinson, Salter, Smith, Stuller, West, and Woods

a. Health Care Task Force

Dr. Norman Francis recognized Ms. Donna Fraiche for a report from the Health Care Task Force. Ms. Fraiche in turn recognized Dr. Les Johnson and Dr. Jimmy Guidry. Together they gave a Powerpoint presentation (Attachment A) that detailed the work of the task force as well as introducing and explaining the resolution they would later present. The resolution supported the funding of the Louisiana Response Network (LERN), formalizing an ESF-8 incident command structure, and in addition creating a Bureau of Emergency Preparedness as its own agency within DHH. Before concluding her presentation, Ms. Fraiche publicly recognized the work that Colletta Barrett has done for the task force.

Dr. Johnson thanked Ms. Fraiche for the job she did on condensing the information as well as the board for hearing the presentation.

Dr. Guidry noted his appreciation as well for being present.

Mr. Tim Coulon inquired about the preparedness for the upcoming hurricane season. Dr. Guidry explained the governmental reorganization to the board and continued by explaining the tentative evacuation plans that had been formulated to that point.

Mr. Rod West inquired whether healthcare professionals had weighed in on LERN as well as the control that hospitals will have in the system. Ms. Colletta Barrett explained that there have been 36 meetings held across the state that explained and sought comment on the system. She noted that both public and private hospitals will participate in the LERN system.

Mr. Mike Woods noted that without funding from the Legislature this system will not work due to the private and public partnership. He expressed his appreciation to the task force members as well.

Mr. John Landry inquired as to the location of the nine regional command centers. He expressed his concern for the low call center comparison between Louisiana and Colorado. Ms. Barrett responded that the command centers are located at 911 call center locations around the state. She explained that LERN is an additional layer to the 911 system. Ms. Barrett assured the board that the call centers are equally disbursed in regard to demographics. Dr. Johnson assured Mr. Landry that the low number of call centers is due to the effective trauma care centers throughout the state. He further explained the reasons why the task force feels that this system will work for Louisiana.

There being no comments or corrections, upon motion duly made by Ms. Donna Fraiche and seconded by Mr. Tim Coulon the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Endorse the Emergency Preparedness recommendations.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Public Health and Health Care Task Force of the Louisiana Recovery

Authority does hereby accept and endorse the recommendations for emergency preparedness as presented in the attached report and urges the Louisiana Legislature to fully fund the programs and projects for immediate and ongoing implementation.

Voting: Blake, Bollinger, Coulon, Cross, Davison, Fraiche, Francis, Henning, Johnson, Landry, Leach, Leger, Mackie, Morrison, Robinson, Smith, Stuller, Voelker, West and Woods.

b. Housing Task Force

Dr. Norman Francis recognized Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. for a report from the Housing Task Force. Mr. Leger reminded the board of the status of the housing plan in regard to the federal process that it must go through. He noted the discussions between task force members, legislators, and the public. Mr. Leger briefly touched on the changes to the action plan, leaving it to be further explained by Mr. Andy Kopplin. One of these changes applied to the qualifications of individuals should Congress not fully fund the program. Previously, the action plan called for restrictions on the basis of income. The action plan was amended to allow for a partial funding program that covers up to 50% of the amount homeowners would eventually qualify to receive. The income level requirements were stripped from the action plan. After explaining the action plan, Mr. Leger introduced the resolution. (A copy of the full action plan and resolution can be found as Attachment B and C.)

Mr. Kopplin noted the time that Mr. Leger has put into the action plan and thanked him for his hard work. He then recognized Adam Knapp, Miles Bruder and Dave Bowman for the work that they have done in developing the action plan. Mr. Kopplin continued by thanking the non-staff consultants that have assisted in the development of the action plan. He then continued his speech by giving a brief update on proposed additional federal funds.

Mr. Tim Coulon inquired whether the action plan could be amended as operational concerns arise. Mr. Kopplin responded that there was time to tweak the action plan to include as much detail as possible.

Mr. Kopplin then gave a Powerpoint presentation which outlined the changes to the action plan from the previous week.

Mr. Boysie Bollinger sought clarification on whether federal monies will be in place before assistance can be disbursed to Louisiana citizens. Mr. Kopplin responded that this was the likely scenario.

Ms. Donna Fraiche inquired as to the existence of legislation for state management organizations. Mr. Kopplin responded that he was unaware of any particular legislation, but that he would research the issue.

Dr. Francis inquired whether unused money allotted to the housing program would return to the LRA for usage. Mr. Kopplin responded that it would be up to the LRA to determine what use the money should serve.

Mr. David Voelker inquired into the status of laws regarding unused housing monies. Mr. Kopplin responded that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) expected the money to be returned if unused.

Dr. Calvin Mackie asked whether the monies had to go for housing specifically. Mr. Kopplin responded that the money could be used for redeveloping communities as well.

Ms. Linda Johnson inquired into the status of duplex housing and changes that had been made to the

action plan to address this issue. Mr. Kopplin responded by explaining these changes and noting that multi-unit owners are covered under the homeowner plan or the program for rental properties but not both.

Mr. John Landry inquired whether National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) or any insurance monies would be included in the calculation for the housing plan. Mr. Kopplin responded that no insurance would be included.

Mr. Leger explained the average evaluation method (AVM). This is the method that is typically the most accurate for the pre-storm value. This will be the priority for the implementation of the housing program.

Ms. Fraiche inquired whether AVMs are based upon location. Mr. Leger responded that location does factor into the AVM.

Mr. Kopplin continued his presentation with an explanation of the soft second mortgage process. This is a mortgage process that includes no payment and no interest and is due upon transfer of property.

Mr. Landry inquired whether the soft second mortgage could be paid off by heirs. Mr. Kopplin responded that it could be either paid off or transferred to the heirs.

Mr. Leger explained that the overall goal of the program is to return the homeowners' equity and investment to their property. Mr. Kopplin explained this theory further with numerical examples.

Rev. Blake sought clarification on the soft second mortgage process. Mr. Kopplin re-explained this process.

Mr. Landry inquired into whether mitigation funds would be accessible in this program as well. Mr. Kopplin responded that mitigation grants would be available, but mitigation must be cost effective.

Dr. Francis clarified that the overall cap is \$150,000. Mr. Kopplin confirmed this.

Mr. Tom Henning sought clarification on the cost analysis of housing that is completely gone. Mr. Kopplin responded that the cost would be dictated by the new construction. He continued that the programmatic details would include this type of information.

Ms. Johnson noted to the chair that she felt there needed to be more information made available to the public about mitigation grants. Mr. Kopplin responded that the contractor that takes over the process would be responsible for informing homeowners of all the options. He continued that with one application, homeowners would be applying for all available assistance.

Rev. Blake proposed a scenario of a widow that was completely confused about her options. Mr. Kopplin responded that the contractor of the program will be responsible for explaining all options. He continued that nonprofits would also be working with the contractor to ensure that all homeowners have the time and attention they require.

Dr. Mackie inquired about the status of those homeowners that have funded their own improvements. Mr. Kopplin responded that the process would be more difficult however, with a FEMA assessment of damages, those homeowners would be applicable under the program as well.

Mr. Rene Cross asked whether you could go back and pay for things that had already been reconstructed.

Mr. Kopplin responded that he would check with HUD to be sure.

Mr. Kopplin continued his presentation with a discussion of the options available to repair homes that belonged to individuals that passed away since the storms. He stated that the hope was for homes to be repaired and the homeowner to live there for three years.

Rev. Blake sought clarification on who must live in the house during the three years. Mr. Kopplin responded that the house must be owner-occupied.

Mr. Kopplin continued forward in his presentation covering the topics of benefit calculation, rental units, leveraging funds, equitable fund distribution, and home purchase assistance.

Mr. Rod West inquired about the existence of a sunset provision in the housing plan. Mr. Kopplin responded that the solicitation for offers (SFO) has a calendar and program oversight time frame. Dr. Francis and Mr. Bollinger added comments that every homeowner is to move forward.

Mr. Kopplin continued his presentation to cover the topics of homeless assistance, benefits for low- and moderate-income individuals, as well as a special provision written into the action plan to apply to St. Bernard Parish. During his presentation, Mr. Kopplin noted that 50% of the assistance monies must go to low- and moderate-level individuals.

Mr. Bollinger inquired whether HUD guidelines had determined the percentage of low- and moderate-level individuals that would be served. Mr. Kopplin explained that the low-income provision is a Congressional guideline (typically at 70%) unless the HUD Secretary waives the guidelines, which he has, thus the 50%.

Dr. Francis inquired as to whether Mississippi's recovery plan would include part of the Louisiana recovery plan. Mr. Kopplin stated that it is a possibility since Mississippi and Louisiana have shared information during this process.

Dr. Francis commented that the recovery of the state needs to be based on a common-sense approach that can work with all homeowners.

Mr. Robinson inquired into the existence of a review panel. Mr. Kopplin responded that there would be a review panel and it may possibly be a subcommittee of the board.

Mr. Bollinger noted that there are guidelines that must be followed when dealing with federal funds. Mr. Kopplin confirmed this.

Dr. Mackie suggested including a clause that would mandate an energy efficient building process and inquired whether this mandate could be codified. Mr. Kopplin responded that there is a section in the housing plan that emphasizes quality construction and energy efficient building. He noted that a future action plan could include that clause if it pleased the board.

Mr. Matt Stuller asked whether mortgage holders would be co-payor on all payment proceeds. Mr. Kopplin responded that the program sends the check to the homeowner. It would then be the homeowner who goes through a legal process and works with the lender. Mr. Bollinger reiterated the fact that the goal is to put the money with the homeowner and not with the bank.

Mr. Stuller continued his questioning by asking if people should be allowed to rebuild in areas that are

depending on uninsured levee protection. Mr. Leger responded that it is up to the local municipalities land use guidelines. He continued that the LRA encourages implementing the best available science. Mr. Bollinger, Mr. Leger and Mr. Kopplin engaged in a conversation during which Mr. Kopplin and Mr. Leger briefly explained the FEMA and Corps of Engineers presentation from the previous week (April 19, 2006).

Mr. Tim Coulon inquired whether the scope of the FEMA guidelines should be broadened and since they are not law, should they be put into law. Mr. Kopplin explained that to participate in the NFIP, parishes must accept base flood levels. He went on to state that the action plan says that parishes will follow FEMA flood elevations; however, it includes an appeal process to the LRA by the parishes.

Mr. Stuller inquired about best practices to advise parishes on what homeowners should do. Mr. Kopplin responded that community action plans would cover that information. He continued his discussion by briefing the board on the Rockefeller grant that the state received. Mr. Kopplin continued by saying that homeowners will have much information available to them.

Mr. Voelker discussed possible future grants for which the state may qualify.

Mr. John Smith inquired how lenders will work with homeowners since the lenders must have assurance that money is available. Mr. Kopplin responded that discussions are ongoing with the Louisiana Bankers Association and a group of national lenders. He continued that the lending community's interest is similar to LRA's.

Mr. Leger introduced Mr. Joseph DiFatta, Jr. and Mr. Craig P. Taffaro, Jr., both of St. Bernard Parish. Mr. DiFatta gave a scenario which would provide LRA a reason to exempt certain parishes from following the flood elevation maps.

Mr. Landry noted that there should be a disclaimer for those receiving assistance from the housing program.

Mr. Taffaro cautioned the board from putting too many qualifications on homeowners. He spoke in support of not compelling St. Bernard Parish to follow the advisory flood maps. Mr. Leger noted that the action plan allows for parishwide exceptions to the advisory flood maps.

Dr. Francis noted that it is important to separate the safety issues from the insurance issues.

Ms. Johnson inquired whether each homeowner would have to come before the LRA. Mr. Kopplin responded that they would not have to.

Mr. Kopplin concluded his presentation with a discussion on the buyout option and fair market values.

Mr. Leger concluded the task force report by noting that these were substantive changes to the action plan but the action plan remains primarily in the same form as when it was first submitted to the board.

Dr. Francis recognized the public comment portion of the meeting and recognized the following individuals for their personal comments.

Ms. Angela Glover Blackwell of Policylink applauded the board for the design of the housing action plan. She praised the affordability and the attention given to the elderly, homeless and special communities. Dr. Francis thanked her for continued work with the LRA. He noted that extra time was taken so that the

plan could be gotten right the first time.

Ms. Elizabeth English of the LSU Hurricane Center noted her disdain for the FEMA advisory flood maps and the rebuilding requirements associated with them. Dr. Francis thanked her for her comments.

Ms. Patricia Gay, with the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, explained the work that her organization does and advocated details in the action plan for historic buildings. Mr. Kopplin noted that there are architectural designs that the LRA is advocating to match existing architecture.

There being no comments or corrections, upon motion duly made by Mr. Leger and seconded by Mr. Rod West the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Approval of the Road Home Housing Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Recovery Authority does hereby endorse the Road Home Housing Program as drafted in the Action Plan Amendment and urges the Governor, the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget and the Louisiana Legislature to approve and recommend this Action Plan Amendment to HUD.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Recovery Authority approves that technical changes may be made with the approval of the Executive Director of the LRA.

Voting: Bollinger, Coulon, Cross, Francis, Henning, Johnson, Landry, Leach, Leger, Mackie, Morrison, Robinson, Smith, Stuller, Voelker, West and Woods.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no further public comments.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Francis announced that there would be a press conference at the State Capitol following the meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Kopplin, Executive Director

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Date approved: _____